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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews social science literature and trends indicated by poll data to examine the political status of women and the extent of their political participation. It is presented in four major sections. Section I summarizes research and presents statistics concerning women's (1) participation in political activities such as voting, lobbying, attending conventions, and running for public office: (2) political skills; and (3) attainment of public office on national and local levels. Section II identifies an ideology of sexism which guides all social and political activity in the country. In terms of this concept, the author reviews women's nurturant role in society, their values as feminine citizens with greatest interest in moral issues, and the specialization of their functions as elected officials in Congress and state legislatures. Section III explores the consequences of sex-role stereotyping in politics for political democracy and social policy in the United States. Section IV reviews social policy issues which affect women's political behavior. The general issue of women's liberation is emphasized in the discussion. (AV)

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SOCIAL POLICY ISSUES AFFECTING WOMEN'S POLITICAL ROLES

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SOCIAL POLICY ISSUES AFFECTING WOMEN'S POLITICAL ROLES

The title suggested -- and accepted -- for this paper is in itself an affirmation of a distinction which ought not to exist in a society that takes seriously its democratic values and precepts. It is, after all, more than five decades since the Nineteenth Amendment made the political status of women legally identical with that of men. The notion that ethnic -- or religious-minority groups within the population have roles to play within the American political system is rather a suspect one, suggesting a frankly realistic or even approving acceptance of differential political capabilities and opportunities as between groups. Role playing is not, after all, simply the furtherance of distinct claims or the choice of certain methods to achieve one's aims vis-a-vis decisionmakers. Such behavior is accepted as necessary or even desirable by virtually all analysts of functioning democracies. But to speak of a role, for instance, for Mexican-Americans within our political system is to suggest that there is a place for them within the system that is distinct from that of other groups; that expectations in regard to their behavior, contributions and rewards within that system are formed with regard to their attributes by birth -- as Merican-Americans. To assert the existence of such roles is also to affirm the acceptance of such norms and expectations on the part of the person and persons to which they are assigned. Neither Mexican-Americans nor their champions, nor anyone claiming to be free of prejudice towards the political actions and opportunities of minorities, would accept, then, the assertion of political roles for this group, either as description or prescription.

Yet -- in regard to women, a little more than half of the American electorate, the assignment of political roles and the enactment of the same is widely agreed to, not just in terms of being perceived, but in terms of being allowed to remain unchallenged. It is a striking and ironic testimony to the double standard still in effect in the political arena, that its practitioners and analysts alike should even today continue to speak blithely and calmly about the "political roles" of women. What we are talking about here for this half of the nation is political behavior and consequent rewards shaped and circumscribed according to models made to apply only to this group and only by virtue of the members

attributes by birth. Given the interplay between role and status so convincingly demonstrated in a plethora of sociological studies[1], such role playing suggest the existence of a stratification system that is in clear contradiction to the norms and values explicitly agreed on as forming the basis for our form of political democracy.[2] Stratification may be inevitable, in that rewards, in terms of policies benefitting the group, bears a relationship to input, in terms of quality and rate of participation of the group. The problem and challenge to democracy comes up only as the input itself on the part of a social group is definitely and distinctly limited by virtue of roles ascribed to members of the group by birth.

That such is the case with women can easily be shown by an examination of the social science literature describing the degree and direction of womens political participation as well as a review of the political status of women. One has the choice, of course, to presume that inherent differences between the sexes is what lies behind the enormous discrepancy in degree of representation and attainment of political power. On the part of this writer, the assumption is rather that such inherent differences as may exist between men and women on the psycho- or physiological level are not of the character or magnitude to explain the striking difference in achievement of status and power on the part of these groups in the political arena.[3]

In examining the political roles of women and the social policy issues affecting the same, it seems important to look at the consequences as well as the causes of the political behavior distinctive of women as a group. To isolate social policy issues that affect or change that same behavior becomes the next task. Here, however, the effort will be made to find which, if any, issues tend to cause change in the overall role-complex shaping womens political motivations and efforts. It is presumed that what is of greatest interest here is to discover what type of issue-formulation and policymaking can best promise not just to affect, but to do away with the "political roles" of women in our democracy.

I

It has long been an axiom in political science that in the political arena men and women behave differently. In the first comprehensive treat-

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ment of the subject, Maurice Duverger comments that "women ... have the mentality of minors in many fields, and, particularly in politics, they will accept paternalism on the part of men. The man-husband, fiance, lover, or myth -- is the mediator between them and the political world."[4] (p. 129)

The male chauvinism of Duverger's statement is an overt one and few contemporary political scientists would care to couch their judgment in such blatantly offensive terms. Nevertheless, any review of the literature on the political behavior of women shows that Duverger's evaluation is widely shared among the experts. Both in regard to participation, level of efficacy, level of conceptualization, information and issue-orientation, differences have been perceived and documented between men and women that clearly suggest the latter group to be the most deficient in attributes required for effective citizenship in a democracy. Changes in the rate and level of participation of women have occurred recently and can be documented, but the data are as yet lacking for an analysis of a possible parallel shift in these other dimensions. We shall therefore, in the first instance, focus on the earlier findings in attempting the synthesis required for a delineation of women's political roles from the perspective of behavioral science.

Participation:

As early as 1937, an authority on political behavior concluded that "At every social level women vote less than men."[5] The difference in election turnout between the sexes, highly significant at that time, has lessened over the years, until in the national election of 1968 it was not more than 3.8 percent. But as late as 1948 and 1954 there were still 10 percent more men than women exercising their right of franchise,[6] and, as we see, even in 1968 the greater absence of women from the polls may have been of crucial consequence for the presidential election of that year. Participation in politics refers to a great many activities besides that of voting, however. Discussing politics, writing letters to Congressional representatives or editors, contributing money to campaigns, attending party conventions and, finally, running for public office, are all important participatory acts. Yet in all of these, the political behavior literature can tell us, women are less engaged than men.[7]

The following table tells the story, repeated with few and minor

variations up to this date:

Table 1

Percentage Scoring High* in Political Participation, By Sex And Educational Level, 1956

Education	Male	Female	Difference
Grade school	70%	52%	18
High School	80	71	9
College	91	88	3

Source: V.O. Key, Jr., Public Opinion and American Democracy (New York: Knopf, 1961), Table 13.9, p. 331. Copyright © 1961 by V.O. Key, Jr. Reprinted by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

* A score of 3 or 4.

The relationship between involvement in organizations and participation in politics has also been clearly demonstrated,[8] and again, we find the earlier observation of women's lesser activities in this realm confirmed:

Table 2

Percentage of Respondents Who Belong to Some Organization

Nation	Male	Female	Difference
United States	68%	47%	21

Source: Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, The Civic Culture (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1963), Table X.3, p. 247. Copyright 1963 by Princeton University Press.

Even on the level of local government, where women are found to be more active and better represented in terms of candidacies and office-holders, we encounter a greater reluctance among women than among men to involve themselves in public affairs. In March '69, the Gallup organization put the following question regarding civic participation to a national sample of men and women: "Suppose you were asked to serve on a committee that would deal with some local problem, such as housing, recreation, traffic, health and the like -- would you accept?"

Here are the answers:

Table 3

	Yes	No	Not Sure
Men	65%	34%	1%
Women	53	45	2

Source: The Gallup Poll '69.

Interestingly enough, the greater disinclination among women to engage in politics also influences their views of their son's political roles (It is, of course, both typical and suggestive that in this recent poll the possibility of equivalent commitment on the part of a daughter was not considered). In July of 1973 another Gallup Poll was taken on the following question: "If you had a son, would you like to see him go into politics as a life's work?"

The responses were as follows:

Table 4

	Yes	No	No Opinion
Men	29%	57%	14%
Women	18	70	12

Source: The Gallup Poll '73

Political Skills

In regard to the important dimensions of political sophistication, issue-orientation, candidate-recognition, scholars in the field have long reported differences between the sexes that do not reflect well on the political skills of women.[9] In "The Civic Culture"[10] Almond and Verba found 56% of men but only 39% of women high in expression of understanding on national issues. Women show greater competence on local issues, but a difference still persist, with 68% of the men and 63% of the women high in the expression of local understanding.

Research also suggests that women are more responsive to issues with moral overtones and are more likely to personalize politics.[11] The above relates to the more important dimension of "level of political conceptualization", i.e., the ability to conceptualize, to identify and distinguish

ideological abstractions or at the very least group interests. These are, it is generally agreed, necessary qualities for effective exercise of one's citizenship rights, but, again, we find women comparing less favorably with men in the most thorough study on the subject available to date. The following table, from The American Voter, tells the story:

Table 5

Relation of Sex and Education to Level of Conceptualization, 1956

	Grade School		High School		College	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Level of conceptualization						
A. Ideology	8%	1%	17%	5%	34%	27%
B. Group Benefit	43	33	52	44	36	34
C. Nature of times	30	26	19	26	19	21
D. No issue content	19	40	12	25	11	18
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Number of cases	251	291	354	537	175	155

Consistent with these findings concerning issue-orientation and level of political conceptualization, attitude surveys frequently reveal that women respondents fall into the "no response" or "no opinion" categories at a higher rate than men.

In regard to candidate recognition, the Harris Poll of July '70 found 62% of men but only 53% of women able to identify the Senators of their state. The difference was even larger as respondents were asked to identify the parties of their representatives in the Senate; here only 47% of women were able to give the correct answer as against 60% of men.

Women also constitute by far the larger group within the "ticket-splitters", a growing and increasingly important phenomenon in our electoral process. To students of political behavior this does not reflect well on

the political orientations of the female half of the nation. The great majority of these "independent voters" -- in the sense of those who are not committed to a party and who tend to switch their votes from election to election or within elections, pick candidates "for the office" and not "from the party"-- are quite simply political outsiders. They are the people, by and large, who neither care much nor know much about politics.[12] Based on a National sample taken in '67 by Market Opinion Research, Inc. 57.2% of the ticket splitters were female, -- 42.8% were male.

Political Office:

The lesser participation of women in politics, their relative lack of political skills is more than reflected in the number of women holding political office. In fact, the percentage of women in decision-making positions within our political system is astonishingly low. The national data are so well known that they hardly need to be repeated -- as of 1973, only 14 women among the 437 members of the House of Representatives, none in the Senate, none in the Cabinet, none on the Supreme Court. In the fifty-three years since the passage of the 19th Amendment, only three women have served as Cabinet members, no woman has succeeded in obtaining the nomination for President or Vice-President of either of the two major parties, the highest number of women to serve in the House of Representatives are 17 and in the Senate 2 (in the 87th Congress)[13]

In the state legislatures women are doing better, but are still lagging far behind men in representation. In 1972 we find 344 women among the 7,700 state legislators across the nation.[14] An increase of 18.9% of women elected to state legislative posts in 1972 brought the number up to 424, but the percentage of women in legislatures is still only 5.5%. Only three women have served as governors of their states, and on the executive level, each

of them succeeded husbands who held the post before them. In fact, in the case of two out of the three (Miriam A. Ferguson of Texas and Lurleen Wallace of Alabama), it was widely recognized that they ran in lieu of their husbands who promised to and in effect did run the administration for them.

The picture is hardly brightened as we look at other high state offices, either legislative or appointive. Only one woman has served as Attorney General and three as lieutenant governor, while a few more have gained acceptance in the less political jobs of Secretary of State, Treasurer or Auditor. It should also be added that in the power structures within the state legislatures, the impression of an all male world is further confirmed.

In local government, women have made greater inroads. While recent aggregate data are incomplete, reports indicate a significant increase of women officials and administrators in the last three years, as well as in the preceding decade. Informal surveys still show them far from achieving their share of representation in city and county governments. It is also important to note that only one woman has won the mayorship in a large (over 200.00 inhabitants) city; Mrs. Patience Latting of Oklahoma City, running for election in 1972.

In examining these crucial dimensions of the political contributions of women in American society -- participation, political skills, holding of public office -- it becomes difficult not to agree with the judgment expressed almost uniformly by scholars in the field: that woman is less of a political animal than man, both in terms of motivations, capabilities, and achievements. The findings reviewed so far do suggest that a significant percentage of American women are reluctant to become actors in politics and/or

deficient in the qualities required for sound judgment and positive involvements in the political arena. While male resistance may be a contributing factor in preventing women from competing for and winning public office, the record of women's accomplishments in this field is so conspicuously low given women's share of the vote (53.7 percent of the qualified voters in 1970), that it can only be explained on the basis of women's own motivations and judgments. And so it seems that the suggestion of a "political role" for women is indeed warranted, in the sense that it is so perceived and acted out by a decisive portion of the female electorate. Political action, meanwhile, like any other action, is a combination of opportunities, resources and motives. Discrimination against women in the political arena resulting in a limitation of opportunities has already been investigated and documented in a number of studies;[15] at this time and for our purposes the focus has to be on motives, or more specifically on the nature and causes of the feminine role construct that contributes to the political action of women -- in the aggregate -- being significantly different from that of men.

II

The term "sexism" is rarely given a definition acceptable to the trained ears of a social analyst. Yet its use can be defended and, indeed, recognized as indispensable, as soon as one admits to a pattern of discrimination affecting women in most all areas of life in the United States. It is amply documented by now that what we are confronted with here is a complex of forces closely akin and analogous to racism; i.e., a system of social, political and psychological pressures that tend to suppress a group with certain biological characteristics. Throughout our society, women have been systematically relegated to a substrata within the major strata they occupy by virtue of educational achievement and experience. Any examination of

the power structure of American society, moreover, point to the conclusion that women are virtually excluded from positions of authority in both government, labor unions and the corporate economy.

The sexism we are referring to here is, of course, institutionalized; its controls and discriminatory patterns being maintained through legal codes and institutionalized behavior. It is also crucial to recognize that sexism has an ideology, implanted by institutions centrally located in the socialization process. For it is clear that in a society where the official creed calls for justice, freedom and equality of opportunity for all, the existence of serious inequities and systematic supression for a major group has to somehow be rationalized. A degree or a kind of inferiority has to be assumed in regard to women for citizens of this democracy to have accepted the relegation of the feminine half of the nation to this low status. Male domination has to be considered normal, women's subordinate assignation proper for the sexist institutions to function as smoothly as they do.

The possibility seems strong that what is perceived and accepted as the "political roles" of women in the U.S. ties in with the ideology that forms the underpinings for the whole sexist system. For the suppression of women, as that of any other sociological minority,[16] rests ultimately on what is believed about their innate nature and their proper and necessary role in society. It is this that sets the context in which decisions are made for and against giving access to women in the field of any one activity and in which behavior is judged as either appropriate or inappropriate. And just as importantly, women's self concepts are to a great extent dependent on the core of imputed and preferred feminine attributes in the socity and their behavior tends, therefore, to be shaped according to the same.

The belief system we are talking about here fits very well the definition

of an ideology and can most appropriately be called the ideology of sexism. For its beliefs and postulates are well integrated; it is designed to direct and guide social and political activity, and it rests on assumptions which are not reliably tested, but to some degree accepted on faith.[17]

What, then. are its components? And how do these relate to the differential input and rewards of women in the political arena?

The Feminine Role

The first tenets of our sexist ideology are easily discovered: woman is different from man, in psychological as well as biological make-up. Woman, consequently, has a different role to play in the human environment.[18]

The "true" nature of woman has been endlessly depicted, not just in mass media and popular literature, but in social science texts. It has come under serious challenge only in recent years. The basic idea is still that for women, (though no longer for other human groups) biology is destiny. The fact that she bears children and has menstrual periods alone make her prey to hormonal influences which shape her temperament and abilities in certain distinct ways. Woman is supposedly more emotional than man, less able to apply logic to problems and situations, more conforming, less aggressive, but also more devious and superior, naturally, in that mysterious "feminine" quality, intuition.

It is the "nurturant qualities" of woman that generally finds approval by Freudian psychologists in their more benevolent moods. Modern sociologists, as well, appear to share in this value-judgment. The female, in Talcott Parsons analysis for instance, becomes "expressive" and the male "instrumental."[19] The traits that go with these descriptions compliment precisely those proclaimed to be naturally feminine or masculine, according to "Parsonian" Orville G. Brim.[20] Expressive for a woman on the positive

side points to her being kind, obedient, cheerful, affectionate and sensitive.

All very well, until we compare these desired qualities for women with their counterparts for men and then speculate on the political implications following from such assignations.

For -- to be expressive means for a man to be tenacious, curious, ambitious, responsible, original and competitive -- all qualities required for a governing class. In this scheme, the non-aggressive, emotional, submissive and affectionate member of the "weaker" sex -- the "natural" woman, as given the stamp of approval by psychology and sociology -- is perfectly suited to take second place. Just as black citizens, as Gunnar Myrdal points out[20], both her assumed graces and her vices fit her very nicely for the subordinate position assigned to her. For with the "nurturant qualities" of women go her masochism, envy and narcissism, according to Freud -- or her tattling, teasing, jealousy, exhibitionism, negativism, affinity for quarrel and inability to cooperate, according to Parsonians.

Such conceptions provide rationalizations for the sex role standards and sex role typing long in effect in our society, and the content of these are given succinct summary by psychologist Jerome Kagan[21]. To the female they dictate that she must feel needed and desired by a man and that her complete fulfillment in life can come only in raising and rearing a family. Dependency, passivity and conformity is not only permitted, it is encouraged in the girl-child. For the male, on the other hand, sex role standards stress the need to be independent in action, to dominate others and to be able to control strong emotions, especially fear and helplessness. Other primary sex-typed behaviors of special interest in our quest are aggression,

permitted in males, inhibited in females, and intellectual striving -- encouraged in males, deprecated in females.

As a host of scholars have pointed out, ambiguity or frailty in the area of sex-role identity can and does cause severe stress and anxiety in many. The dictations of sex role standards are powerful, indeed, transmitted as they are through the family, the education process, the media and through peers. This goes a long way towards explaining why and how it comes about that girls shy away from activities considered adventuresome or intellectually testing. It also provides clues as to why it is that girls drive to achieve in fields not recognized as properly "feminine" goes into drastic decline as soon as they pass puberty.[22] Here is the basis for the motive to avoid success, which psychologist Matina Horner found operative among most girl undergraduates in a fascinating experiment.[23] For society's dictations of what is desirable in a female clearly preclude the development of independence of mind, intellectual inquisitiveness, assertiveness and a drive to compete. In the comment of sociologist Marlene Dixon, "the entire society is geared to socialize women to believe in and adopt as immutable necessity their traditional and inferior role."[24]

The "Feminine"Citizen

The values and postulates of sexist ideology appear to be quite effectively internalized in most women.[25] This is nowhere as clearly evident as in the sphere of politics. For the peculiarity in the situation of women in the United States is that while they constitute a potential voting majority of this democracy, only a few of them have recently come around to use politics to change the institutional forms of sexism and thereby improve their life chances. Group awareness is conspicuously lacking among women in spite of

the convincing evidence that they do form a sociological minority in this society.

The belief in women's lesser abilities and unsuitability for certain types of activities appears to be the greatest obstacle facing those who would organize women. Male chauvinism may still create formidable barriers in many situations, but women's self-concepts and acceptance of the rightness of their own status make them easy to control. Given the dictates of sex role standards we would expect women to feel less competent than men in the political arena, to be more reluctant to compete for office, to show greater avoidance of controversial issues -- particularly of a non-moral nature, and to be more afraid of change.

As it turns out, these expectations are more than confirmed by research in the area of political behavior, by recent polls and testimonies of political activists and professionals. On the positive side -- again, as could be expected -- we find women high in patriotism, i.e., in approval of the system and the nation; more willing and able to work as volunteers in political campaigns than are men and both more involved and more liberal (in the sense of being tolerant, humane, non-authoritarian) on a number of key issues with highly moral implication. In the findings to be reviewed as well as those already examined, the non-competitive, non-inquisitive, non-assertive, conforming and nurturant female role-model seem, indeed, to have made a major imprint on women's orientations and behavior in the political arena.

As reported in The American Voter[26], the sharpest and most consistent differences between adult men and women turns up in regard to the sense of political efficacy. This is a crucial dimension in a person's inclination and ability to participate in politics, and the researchers found that men

are to a significant degree more likely to feel that they can cope with the complexities of politics and to believe that their participation carries some weight in the political process. More recent data from the 1968 election gathered by the Survey Research Center are also suggestive:

Table 6

Political Efficacy Among Men and Women of Voting Age

	Men	Women
High (4)	17.6%	10.5%
(3)	20.3	20.8
(2)	18.2	19.7
(1)	20.1	20.7
Low (0)	24.1	28.5

As we can see, the conclusion drawn in The American Voter is here given confirmation: A sense of personal competence vis-a-vis the political world has been less adequately transmitted to women than to men.

Women's high score on patriotism together with their lesser sense of citizen duty led quite early to speculations about "vestigial sex roles" inhibiting political participation in women.[27] The impression is confirmed by the finding that it is in the geographical areas and on socio-economic levels where sex typing is the most rigid that we also get the sharpest differentiation in voting turnout between men and women. Women make use of the ballot significantly less, it turns out, in the South, in rural areas and among people with grade school education.[28] Robert Lane quotes some of these non-voters in his Political Life: "... voting is for men", and ..."I think men should do the voting and women stay at home and take care of their work" and again ..."A woman's place is in the home. Leave politics to the man."[28]

Women's reluctance to compete for political office and the greater difficulty in getting approval for women candidates is clearly related to the persistence of conventional thinking about the proper feminine role in politics. It was not until 1958 that a bare majority of American voters (52%) answered yes to the question: "Would you vote for a woman for President?"[30] Significantly, only four percent more women than men were willing to support a female President. And as late as 1972, researchers found

around 30 percent of women voters unwilling to choose one of their own sex in a race between equally qualified candidates distinguished only by sex.[31] These were the "myth-holders", women who still hold on to the belief that "politics is a man's role".

Activists and professionals in the political arena have often commented on the reluctance on the part of many able, politically skilled women to run for office, particularly on the non-local level.[32] More than women's self-concepts may be involved here, of course; the fear of disapproval and brutal put-downs on the part of men with the not uncommon dislike of "brassy" or "aggressive" women is surely involved as well. A recent study of sex role stereotypes replicates previous findings that a significant relationship exists between the careers women choose and their beliefs regarding men's views of the feminine ideal.[33] Women planning to enter male-dominated careers were naturally more concerned with male support than those with traditional career goals. Only 10 percent said they would pursue present goals over the objections of significant men in their lives.

Men's perception of proper feminine behavior also makes for a subtle and yet devastating form for discrimination among politicians. In the informal relationships that are of crucial significance for persons desiring an active political career, women face a problem of generalized resistance.[34] The bars, the sportsclubs, the cloak-rooms, the golf-links where so much of the informal discussions and jockeying among politicians take place, are places where women are either not admitted or are finding their presence frowned on. "Nice women" do not challenge the character of male preserves dominating in these quarters.

The specialization of function according to sex which occurs within Congress and state legislatures is also indicative of the persistence of sex role stereotyping in politics. Women representatives, it turns out, put a greater emphasis on the social or so-called "soft"issues .[35] The role of representative for women is thus modified towards including some of the usual cultural concerns of women. It may be, as Frieda Gehlen suggests, a means of reducing stress in a man's world.

Committee-assignments for women representatives carry this a bit further. Women in Congress, for example, are disproportionately assigned to lower status committees dealing with the same "soft" issues. An authora-

tive chart of the Congressional Establishment for the 91st Congress reveals only one woman member among the 35 most powerful individuals on the Hill.[36] She is Margaret Chase Smith, who received this designation after five terms in office and being named Republican Conference Chairman, and who since has been removed after losing her election campaign of 1972. A chart of the standing committees in the House of Representatives in the 91st Congress shows no women members in the following important committees: Rules; Armed Services, Judiciary, Interstate and Foreign Commerce and Foreign Affairs.[37]

These conceptions of the sexes' political roles were found to be operative in an earlier study even among members of the League of Women Voters and their spouses. A striking agreement was noted between them that women might discuss "local government" and "education policy" but that they should not discuss "labor policy" or "tax policy".[38] Any survey of Gallup polls up to this date finds this specialization still in effect, in that the number of "No opinion" responses on these issues is significantly greater among women than men.

Several scholars have speculated that this stronger emphasis on moral issues among women, consonant with their approved "nurturant" roles, leads to excessive focus on the superficial less relevant aspects of politics. In the opinion of some, it is likely to breed somewhat greater intolerance and fear of conflict.[39]

Resistance to change is another attitude supposedly more typical of women than men, and indeed, polls over the years find women to identify themselves more often than men do as "conservative" or "middle-of-the-road." Even among college undergraduates, these differences persist. The following Gallup poll, taken among a national sample in June '70 tells the story:

Table 7

Political Self-Identification

	Far Right	Conservative	Middle-of-Road	Liberal	Far Left
	(in per cents)				
Men	2	15	21	45	13
Women	1	15	34	38	9

Source: The Gallup Poll, '70

It appears, in the end, that it is only on one level of politics that women are more active and less inhibited than are men; -- that is, as volunteers. Political professionals have for years praised the contributions of

women is this area and frankly admitted that without the female volunteer force in many campaigns, the whole effort might collapse.

Thus, Anne Armstrong, co-chairman of the Republican National Committee, confirmed in 1971 that "women make up the backbone of most volunteer campaign efforts for many reasons."[40] And the magazine, Campaign Insight, agrees and specifies one of the reasons: "The majority of these women are not in politics for what they can get out of it, but because they want to serve."[41]

Such service does not, of course, conflict with prevailing conceptions of the feminine role. Volunteers are subordinates, do-gooders, housekeepers in the political arena; to throw one's self into such activities need not for a woman cause the much-feared role strain or criticism by peers.

To round out the picture of the "feminine" citizen it should be brought out that the issues women care the most about in the national arena are clearly those with strong moral components. War, amnesty, crime, death penalty, abortion are among the major controversies that have engaged women and where, according to both the polls and recent history they have been more than usually willing to take a stand. In all but the last mentioned issue -- abortion -- their opinions register as more liberal -- that is, more humane, tolerant, non-authoritarian -- than men. The findings here will be reviewed in the following section of the paper, and their consequences for policy-making analyzed. For now, let it suffice to say that the political behavior of women in this area is also consonent with sex role dictates and therefore further serve to document the strength of the ideology of sexism in our society.

III

The question that must be raised at this point is: What difference does it make? What, if any, are the consequences of sex role stereotyping in politics, either for women themselves, for political democracy or for social policy in the United States?

The most obvious cost for the female half of the nation of the self-deprecation and lack of group awareness that follows acceptance of the feminine role model, is their lack of representatives among political decisionmakers. This, again, contributes to the creation and maintenance of a stratification system where women are systematically relegated to lower status. But the cost is also a psychological one, both for those who

choose to challenge the sex role stereotype that would inhibit their active participation in political life, and for those who are unable to move beyond it.

It should be obvious by now that the feminine role model is incompatible with that of the political activist, not to speak of the professional politician. The contradiction involved here can be a source of personal strain for many. Women politicians are apt to become the victims of sociological ambivalence,[42] facing contradictory normative expectations of attitude, beliefs and behavior in their various statuses. This can severely undermine training, aspiration, motivation and planning, as Cynthia Fuchs Epstein points out. This ambivalence is also rooted in the social structure and not in any individuals personality problems. In a recent study of women politicians, Edmond Costantini and Kenneth Craik found their "self-confident approach to life and their strong, purposeful style" to be complicated by "doubts and concern about their place in society."[43] Personality disturbances are not un-typical among women professionals, generally, and patterns of self-hatred and group disparagement is often encountered.[44]

The mental health of the non-participant woman, the one who totally accepts and adepts herself to the approved feminine role-model, is, however, far more in question. In a variety of studies, the non-participant in politics has been characterized as a person that suffers from any one or all of the following debilitating characteristics: She has difficulty in being sociable, is lacking in ego-strength, or is subject to anomie, alienation or cynicism.[45] The available evidence suggests that non-participants more often have neurotic needs -- or have them to a greater degree -- than participants. This group -- in which the "feminine" women figure so prominently -- is to a large extent composed of insecure, timid, and withdrawn people who do not have great faith in their ability to deal effectively with their environment.

What, then, are the costs to political democracy to have half of the citizenry influenced by role models that are bound to make their exercise of political rights and duties more difficult? How do the strongly endorsed and quite effectively cultivated "feminine" traits of dependency, passivity and conformite relate to the requirements of democratic citizenship?

As we examine the writings of our classic democratic theorists[46] we find agreement among them on the qualities desired -- and for some, required --

in the citizenry for a democracy to function properly: Awareness, responsibility, self-reliance, rationality. Moreover, only broad participation could ensure that persons qualified for leadership would be found and selected, and only active involvement in politics by all citizens would prevent undue power to come into the hands of a few.

The contrast between these highly praised attributes and democratic requisites with the characteristics of the conventionally feminine woman is as striking as it is immediately apparent. Sweetness, passivity, helplessness may be appealing qualities in a variety of situations, but the political is not one of them. A woman whose self-concept is entirely what the ideology of sexism would have it be, is not likely to act on the advise of democratic theorists: To make independent judgment, voice her opinions, engage in debate and take on political responsibilities.

The effect of sex-typing in politics is not only to disarm the American woman politically, therefore, it is also to deprive American democracy of the potentially informed and intelligent contributions of over half its citizenry. It is clear that the model of citizen participation and responsibility posed in classic democratic theory cannot be approximated as long as current sex standards present serious obstacles to women's effective participation in politics.

Women's absence from the governing circles of our society would present a great problem to the pluralist school of political science as well.[47] The viability of pluralist democracy depends to a great extent on whether indiduals fit to govern will be found in any situation, and it is recognized that those qualified to take on such delicate and difficult tasks are far and few between. Pluralists stress that this tiny minority on whom rests the responsibility of governing, must be constantly replenished.

But with the incapacities our ideology of sexism aims to induce in women, we are being deprived, quite simply, of the potential political talents and skills to be found among these 53,7 per cent of eligible voters. As long as sex standards and sex typing continue in their present forms, there is but little chance that women naturally endowed with qualities needed for governing will be added to the pool of new recruits. For pluralists and classic democratic theorists alike, therefore, the ideology of sexism presents a threat to the creation and maintenance of a viable democracy.

As for policy making in the United States, the major consequences of the differential political input of women has been detailed in The Silenced Majority.[48] An examination of geographical location, type of community and socio-economic level of women non-voters verify the hypothesis that "vestigial sex roles" are mainly responsible for their greater absence from the polls. Given the fact that these non-voters are predominantly to be found on the lower socio-economic level, their non-participation has the effect of allowing political leaders to ignore their special needs and thereby contribute to the freezing of the socio-economic status quo.

The impact of non-voting among women in the Presidential election of 1968 offers an intriguing and important example here. In this year, the number of women non-voters exceeded that of men non-voters by no less than four and one-half million. This election, it must be remembered, was decided with a very small differential of votes in favor of the Republican candidate. Given the customary preference for the Democratic party among citizens in the out-groups of our society[49] -- and this is where the vast majority of women non-voters belong -- one might expect that the invasion of these four and one-half million women into the political system would have ensured the election of a Democratic administration.

And indeed, confirmation for this hypothesis can be found in the following table, based on data from the Survey Research Center:

Table 8

Women Non-Voters: Party Preference in 1968 Election

Strong Democrat	20.1%
Not So Strong Democrat	29.3
Independent Democrat	9.2
Independent	13.5
Independent Republican	7.0
Not So Strong Republican	9.2
Strong Republican	3.9
Other, A Political, No Answer	7.9

The importance of Vietnam as a policy issue in the '68 campaign makes it even more likely that the majority of these non-voters would have gone for the Democratic Presidential Candidate. In poll after poll a significantly greater ratio of women than men have shown themselves eager for withdrawal of American troops from Vietnam and at the same time women non-voters rated Hubert Humphrey as more likely to seek withdrawal, less likely to go for complete military victory than Richard Nixon. It should be added

that only 12,7 per cent of the women non-voters rated the problem of Vietnam "not very important in determining your vote for President," while 9,6 per cent as "very important." There is little doubt, therefore, that the input of these additional four and one-half million votes -- the difference between men and women non-voters -- would have brought in a Democratic administration in the U.S. in '68. Given the central position of the Presidency in our system of government as well as the traditional differences in policy-orientation of the two parties, this, in itself, carries quite an impact on the socio-political scene in America.

Increased political participation by women is likely to have other effects as well. Among the social policy issues in the forefront these last four or five years, for example, significant differences have emerged between the attitudes and opinions of women and men in regard to Vietnam, amnesty, crime and death penalty. Women, on the whole, tend to take a definitely more liberal stand on these issues. One may presume, therefore, that if women were to elect their own representatives or to make themselves heard to a greater degree than they are now in the political arena, more liberal solutions to these issues would also be sought and found. As it is, any review of policymaking in these areas shows that it is not the preferences of women that are taken into account by our lawmakers.

As early as September 1970, 64 per cent of women versus only 46 per cent of men were in favor of withdrawing all troops from Vietnam before the end of next year. By August 1972 70 per cent of women versus 54 per cent of men would withdraw all troops from Vietnam by the end of that year. In regard to the bombing of North Vietnam a poll of September 1972 found only 30 per cent of women versus 52 percent of men disapproving.[50]

This is one issue-area where women have little trouble defining their stand and where the differences in orientation between the sexes show up most clearly. The following Gallup poll from November '69 illustrate the relationship:

Table 9

The question: "People are called hawks if they want to step up our military efforts in Vietnam. They are called doves if they want to reduce our military efforts in Vietnam. How would you describe yourself -- as a hawk or a dove?"

	Hawk	Dove	No Opinion	(in per cents)
Men	39	48	13	
Women	23	63	14	

Source: The Gallup Poll, 1969

Similar differences between the sexes show up in regard to the issue of giving amnesty to the young men who left the country to avoid the draft. The Gallup Poll of June 23, '72, found 40 per cent of women versus 31 per cent of men willing to have the young men return without any kind of punishment.

In regard to crime control and in particular the use of death penalty is is interesting to find that while women feel more threatened by crime, they are at the same time more lenient in their attitudes towards perpetrators of crime. In March '72, Gallup found 58 per cent of women versus 20 per cent of men saying they would be afraid to walk at night in an area "around here." 41 per cent of women versus 29 per cent of men also agreed that there was more crime in their areas than there had been a year ago. In spite of these perceptions, only 72 per cent of women versus 75 per cent of men found the courts in their areas "not harsh enough" in dealing with criminals. And in regard to the question of death penalty, that same month, only 45 per cent of women versus 55 per cent of men declared themsleves in favor of it for persons convicted of murder.[51]

The lesser inclination to "toughness" and desire for retribution on the part of women is shown quite clearly in a poll on death penalty conducted by the Harris organization in June 6, '73:

Table 10

The question: "Suppose it could be proved to your satisfaction that the death penalty was not more effective than long prison sentences in keeping other people from committing crimes such as murder, would you be in favor of the death penalty or would you oppose it?"

	Favor	Oppose	Not Sure
		(in per cents)	
Men	40	44	16
Women	31	53	16

Source: The Harris Poll, June '73

The differences in attitudes between the sexes is, in fact, significant

enough in these issue-areas to suggest that it is perhaps not only a group of women, but men as well, who are subject to sex-role dictates in their political behavior. Results in the latter poll in particular can easily be interpreted in light of the compulsion towards toughness and fear of "softness" inherent in the masculine sex role in our society. It might, indeed, be time for a study of "the male role in politics." Sex standards and sex typing appear to have a share in fashioning not just the responses and political behavior of women. And the costs to democracy may be just as severe as we start looking at the pre-fashioned or compulsory political behavior of men who are religiously trying to live up to the masculine role-model.

IV

Having, hopefully, gained some insight into "women's political roles" -- and the sources and consequences of the same -- we can then proceed to take a look at social policy issues affecting women's orientations and behavior in the political arena.

Here, however, we run into an immediate and severely restricting problem; the paucity of research and opinion polls distinguishing women's responses to most social policy issues. No sex break-down is offered in the vast majority of surveys published, even in recent years, and it is consequently difficult, if not impossible, to find definite correlations between the changes we have observed in the political behavior of women and the social policy issues in the forefront in the same period of time.

There may be sufficient material at hand for hypothesis to be formed and tentative conclusions to be suggested. For in the last few years we have, indeed, seen significant changes in the political input of women in the United States. At the same time we can easily isolate one issue area that is both new in terms of capturing the attention of policymakers, media and public, and at the same time speaks directly to the concerns and needs of women in a way that no other social policy issue has done. It does not seem excessively bold to state that the general issue of women's liberation emerging as it has in the three or four years is the single one most likely to have affected the "political roles" of women.

It is precisely in these years that we have witnessed what some observers have termed "a revolution" among women in politics. While that designation is far from accurate, there is no doubt that women now seem more

willing to participate and to make themselves heard, even to run for political office. In 1972 the proportion of women registered to vote about equalled that of men for the first time in American history. The number of women professionally active in politics, as paid campaign staff-members or as candidates were also unequalled. The '72 elections saw an increase of 18,8 per cent women in the state legislatures of the United States, from 344 to 424, and in the House of Representatives from 10 to 14. A woman won the mayorship of a major American City (Oklahoma City) <u>again</u>, for the first time in American history. Campaign Insight, a very professional magazine, indeed, offered the comment that: "More women are becoming interested in politics these days and not just to give coffee parties and keep campaign headquarters clean.... Women of today are appearing in those smoke-filled rooms and often helping to make decisions."[52]

It should not be forgotten either that the 1972 election marked the first time that a woman, Shirley Chisholm, launched a serious -- and to many viable -- campaign for the Presidency of the United States. It was also the first time that a woman, Sissy Farenholt, received substantial support at the national convention for the Vice-Presidential nomination. And the increase of women delegates to the Democratic National Convention in 1972 was nothing less than spectacular, from a ratio of 13 per cent in 1968 to 38 per cent in 1972.

In Congress and in the State legislatures, representatives have been surprised, impressed or shocked in recent years by the influx of women appearing to lobby or to show support for the Equal Rights Amendment. Affirmative Action programs as well have brought out women in significant numbers to testify and to fight discrimination against their own sex. Organizations like NOW, National Organization For Women, and NWPC, National Women's Political Caucus, now have lobbyists in every state legislature as well as in Congress and are in the process of training increasing numbers of women for lobbying and campaign activities. Not surprisingly, spokeswomen of these organizations called the '72 election a victory for feminists. According to NWPC's chairwoman, Ms. Gwen Cherry: "It is a real display of the determination of women to overcome those barriers to full political participation which have historically been cast in their way."[52]

We do have on hand a number of surveys that attempt to measure the impact of women's liberation on the attitudes and beliefs of American women,

but their findings are, to say the least, confusing, if not to say contradictory. Confirmation can however, be found both for the wide-spread recognition of the general issue and the increasing approval on the part of women for the aims of the movement.

It has been pointed out by both the Gallup, Roper and Harris polls, that women in America are in the majority happy with their roles and disapprove of women's liberation. But the views expressed about marriage and about men by these same "happy women" reveal very conflicting opinions. To quote, for instance, from pollster Louis Harris: "The American woman says she is sexually fulfilled, but two out of five think men are only interested in their own sexual gratification. And while two out of three think a man is essential for a woman's happiness, a majority say that most men don't respect their opinions, see them as mindless sex objects and find it necessary for their egos to keep women down."[53]

According to the Roper poll of last spring, on the other hand, only 24 per cent of American women feel they are discriminated against and are treated as second class citizens. At the same time 89 per cent agree that women should have equal job opportunities with men, 61 per cent that there should be free or low cost child care centers for working mothers, and 7[illegible] per cent that women should have equal job opportunities with men.[54]

What all of this points to more than anything else is that the major goals -- as well as some of the key complaints -- of the women's liberation movement have won widespread approval among American women. Significantly, when the term "womens rights groups" rather than "women's liberation" is used in a poll, the measure of approval is much higher. In April '73, the Harris Poll found 56 per cent of the public to have great respect for "women's rights groups."[55]

To increase political participation among women, to change women's political roles, to do away with the sex roles and sex typing that now suppress and inhibit women in the political arena, are all issues of prominence and high priority for the movement. The rough correlation here pointed to with the changes in political orientation and behavior of women and the emergence of these issues may not suffice as conclusive proof that this above all has affected women's "political roles." The suggestion seems strong enough and the potential importance of the findings promising enough to warrant extensive studies in the future.

In the end, a comment from a NOW pamphlet on "Women and Volunteerism" seems both illuminating and appropriate:

The ancient Greeks considered politics the noblest of all activities in which all free men should participate. It was too good for women. In our time we have the opposite rationalization: women are too good for politics. We have to dispell the notion that politics is not for women, that we are too thin-skinned and sensitive for the roughness of political life. Women belong just as much as men in the arena where the decisions are made that affect all our lives. In this process we might also work to elevate politics to approach the ideal of the ancient Greeks.

FOOTNOTES

1. See the discussion in Amundsen, Kirsten: The Silenced Majority, New York: Prentice Hall, 1971, Chapter 2.

2. The most succinct analysis of these are to be found in Myrdal, Gunnar: An American Dilemma. New York: Harpers, 1944.

3. This would by now also be the view of most social psychologists or sex-role experts. See, for example, Sears, R.R., Macoby, Eleanor and Levin, H.: The Development of Sex Differences in Behavior. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966.

4. Duverger, Maurice. Political Role of Women. Paris: UNESCO, 1955, pp 129.

5. Tingsten, Herbert. Political Behavior Studies in Election Statistics. London: P.S. King and Sons, 1937, p. 29.

6. Sources: Lane, R.E. Political Life. Glencoe: Free Press, 1959; Campbell, A., et al. The American Voter. New York: Wiley 1960.

7. See, for example: Almond, G. and Verba, S. The Civic Culture. Boston: Little, Brown, 1965.

8. Ibid. Plus see Milbrath, L.W. Political Participation. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1965; Barber, J.D.: Citizen Politics. Chicago: Markham, 1969.

9. See, for example: James G. Marsh: "Husband-Wife Interaction over Political Issues" Public Opinion Quarterly, XVII (1954) pp 461-470. See also Almond and Verba; Campbell, and Lane.

10. Almond and Verba, op. cit.

11. Costantini, E. and Craik, K.H.: "Women as Politicians" Journal of Social Issues, Volume 28, No. 2, 1972, pp. 217-237.

12. Barber, op. cit., p. 53.

13. Figures are taken from Amundsen, Kirsten: The Silenced Majority, Prentice Hall, 1971.

14. Source: The Spokeswoman. Washington, D.C., December 1972.

15. See Gehlen, Frieda: "Women in Congress". Transaction. October 1969. Also The Silenced Majority, op. cit.

16. See The Silenced Majority, op. cit. Also: Epstein, Cynthia Fuchs, Woman's Place. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971.

17. Hacker, Helen. "Women as a Minority Group." Social Forces. No. 3, 1959.

18. For my summation here, I rely primarily on my earlier analysis in The Silenced Majority, op. cit.

19. Parson, Tacott and Bales, R.F.: Family, Socialization and Interaction. New York: Free Press, 1955.

20. Brim, Orville G. "Family Structure and Sex Role Learning by Children," in Selected Studies in Marriage and Family, edited by Robert Winch. New York: Free Press, 1965.

21. Kagan, Jerome. "Check One - Male - Female", Psychology Today, July, 1969.

22. Davis, James A. "Great Aspirations: Career Plans of America's June 61 College Undergraduates. National Opinion Research Center Report, No. 82, September 1961.

23. Horner, Matina S. "Women's Will To Fail," Psychology Today, November 1969.

24. Dixon, Marlene. Why Women's Liberation? San Francisco Bay Area Radical Education Project, 1969.

25. See, for example, The Silenced Majority, Op. Cit., Chapter 6 and Epstein, op. cit., Chapter 1.

26. See Campbell, op. cit.

27. See Lane, op. cit., Campbell, op. cit. and Stouffer, Samuel: Communism, Conformity and Civil Liberties. Garden City: Doubleday, 1955, pp. 131-155.

28. Campbell, op. cit., pp. 486-492.

29. Lane, op. cit., p. 211.

30. Source: The Gallup Poll. 1958.

31. Wells, Audrey Siess and Smeal, Eleanor Cutri: Women's Attitudes Toward Women in Politics. Unpublished paper presented at the 1972 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, D.C.

32. See the discussion in The Silenced Majority, op. cit., Chapter 4.

33. Hawley, Peggy. Perception of Male Models of Feminity Related to Career Choice. Journal of Counseling Psychology. July 1972, pp. 308-313.

34. Gehlen, op. cit. and The Silenced Majority.

35. Gehlen, op. cit., p. 37.

36. Ibid, p. 125.

37. The Silenced Majority, op. cit., p. 105.

Footnotes (continued)

38. March, op. cit., p. 461.

39. See for example: Stouffer, op. cit., pp. 131-55, and Riesmann, David. "Orbits of Tolerance, Interviews and Elites". Public Opinion Quarterly, 20, 1956, pp. 49-73.

40. Campaign Insight, Vol. 1, No. 24, p. 7.

41. Ibid, Vol. 1, No. 12, p. 3.

42. Epstein, op. cit., p. 19.

43. Costantini, op. cit., p. 225.

44. Epstein, op. cit., p. 26. See also Hacker, op. cit.

45. Milbrath, op. cit., p. 88.

46. The theorists relied on here are primarily John Stuart Mills, Thomas Jefferson, John Dewey. A fuller discussion of this topic is found in The Silenced Majority, Chapter 7.

47. See, for example, Dahl, Robert. Who Governs? New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961.

48. See The Silenced Majority, op. cit., Chapter 7.

49. See The Silenced Majority, p. 148.

50. Source: The Gallup Poll, September 1970, August 1972, and September 1972.

51. Ibid. March 1972

52. The Spokeswoman, op. cit, December 1, 1972, p. 4.

53. Source: The San Francisco Chronicle, March 23, 1973, p. 16.

54. Roper Poll of April 1973.

55. Source: The Sacramento Bee, June 4, 1973, p. 11.